

St. Mary's, Downe
Archdeaconry of Bromley and Bexley
Anglican Diocese of Rochester

Annual Report
of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended 31st December 2024

Aim and purposes

St. Mary's Downe, Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent, who up until his resignation and last service on 21st July was the Reverend John Musson, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

St. Mary's, Downe, is part of a United Benefice with St. Peter and St. Paul, Cudham.

The **Mission Statement** of the Church agreed by the PCC is:

"We exist for three main purposes: Worship, Witness and Welcome:"

- To worship the living God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- To witness to the love of Christ shown supremely in his life, death and resurrection; and
- To welcome all people into our fellowship with the love of Christ.

Structure, Governance and Management

PCC - the method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Mary's, Downe, the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar), churchwarden/s, treasurer, secretary, reader, deanery synod representative and members elected by those who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

During 2024 the PCC met:

March 21st and June 5th and in January, September, October and November jointly with St Peter and St. Paul, Cudham and also in May for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM).

During these meetings a variety of issues of concern and importance connected with the life of the church: worship and services, missional, spiritual, financial, practical and social, along with plans for the re-ordering of the church building were discussed,

Regular PCC agenda items included –

- *Messy Church and children's work.*
- *Pastoral care in the parish and the ongoing work of the Pastoral Visiting Team.*
- *Outreach, mission and community engagement initiatives.*
- *Safeguarding*
- *Financial statements and reports, budgets and parish pledges.*
- *General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).*
- *On-going plans for building and maintenance matters involving the church, building reports and updates, improvements to church building.*
- *Churchyard maintenance and Churchyard Fund*
- *From September the process of seeking a new vicar*

Review of the church year and calendar

In June Rev John Musson announced he was resigning from his role as Vicar of Cudham and Downe; he led his last service on 21st July when he was presented with a gift from the Church congregations.

The PCC was notified by the Diocese that the Patron's Right of Presentation had been suspended for a period of up to three years, while consideration is given to the replacement of the parsonage house and possible pastoral reorganisation. Archdeacon Allie Kerr attended the Joint PCC on 23rd September to discuss the process of seeking a new incumbent; She indicated that the Diocese would look to appoint a Priest in Charge in the first instance. The PCCs continued to work towards preparing the Parish Profile and discussed the appointment of the Parish Reps for submission as soon as possible in 2025.

Feb 4 th	Candlemass/Christingle United All Age Celebration in Downe Village Hall
Feb 11 th	Morning Worship and dedication of new boiler at Downe
Mar 10 th	Mothering Sunday
Mar 15 th	Warm Welcome in Downe Village Hall
Mar 17 th	Passion Sunday an day of Prayer and Gifts Choral Evensong, 6.30 followed by tea and cake
Mar 24 th	Palm Sunday United All Age Service with Holy Communion following a procession with donkey from Christmas Tree Farm
Mar 29 th	Good Friday A reflection service from 2 pm to 3 pm
Mar 31 st	Easter Sunday All Age Communion with baptism\
Apr 28 th	Downe May Queen
May 9 th	Ascension Day Holy Communion at 7.30 pm
May 12 th	United Service with Holy Communion followed by APCM for both churches
Jul 21 st	Farewell service for Rev John Musson at Cudham Compline at St Marys at 9 pm
Sep 29 th	Harvest Festival
Oct 6 th	United Service at Christmas Tree farm celebrating St Francis of Assisi, Patron Saint of animals
Nov 3 rd	All Soulstide Service at 4 pm
Nov 10 th	Remembrance Day Act of Remembrance outside St Marys
Dec 22 nd	Carols by Candlelight at 4 pm
Dec 25 th	Christmas Day All Age Communion

Review of other church events during 2024

1. **Homegroups** continued throughout the year with meetings being held in parishioners homes
2. **Holy Communion** services at St. Mary's on Tuesday mornings at 10am continued until the resignation of the Rev John Musson. They now take place once a month on the second Tuesday of each month
A quiet and reflective service with refreshments afterwards
3. **Christian Meditation Group** held on the first and third Thursdays in the month. The group follow the method taught by John Main, an English Benedictine monk.

4. **The Pastoral Visitors Team** meets regularly and continues to make contact and visits within the Parish. Easter and Christmas gift bags are distributed to those on the regular visiting list.
5. **Warm Welcome** events continued through 2024, welcoming guests from the community.
6. **Messy Church** continued at various times of the year providing an opportunity and outreach for families to receive the Christian message through artwork, singing, reading and hearing God's word. This alternates between Cudham and Downe.
7. **Prayers** daily prayers were held by Zoom and in Cudham church on a Wednesday morning until the resignation of Rev John Musson. Since then a prayer meeting for the Benefice has been held on the first Tuesday of each month in St Marys.

Committees

PCC and the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee can meet between full meetings of the PCC and consists of the Incumbent, Churchwardens, Treasurer and Secretary and two other members of the PCC. It has power to transact any urgent business of the PCC, subject to any directions given by the Council. The Standing Committee met on 13th August.

Church Attendance

The Electoral Roll stood at 46 at the date of the APCM (32 resident, 14 non-resident)
Figures for the church attendance of adults at worship on the four Sundays in October 2024
Are as follows

6th October 18 adults 7 children (Christmas Tree Farm Service)
13th October 8 adults 0 children
20th October 13 adults 1 child
27th October 8 adults 0 children

On average around 12 adults and 2 children attend church each Sunday, although in line with many churches, there is a larger pool of people who attend from time to time.

Occasional Offices

As well as our regular services we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping.

In 2024 the parish church and its ministry celebrated:

One memorial service (Michael Sharpington)
Four funeral services (Dave Witherspoon, Andrew Preznanzsky, Bruce Nagle, Marion Norton)
Four Interment of Ashes (Stanley Robinson, Dennis Robinson, Maisie Loudon-Carter, John Bourden-Smith)
Two baptisms
One Wedding
One Renewal of Wedding Vows

Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). Recruitment of a replacement Parish Safeguarding Officer is underway.

Downe Primary School

Rev. John, Kim and John Curle took collective worship until July 2024:

Kim Curle is Licensed as a Schools and Families Evangelist and she and John Curle are commissioned Anna Chaplains. They continue to take Collective Worship to Downe School

General Data Protection Regulations - the PCC has acted in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which took effect in the UK from 25th May 2018, replacing the existing law on data protection (the Data Protection Act 1998). Mark Comley is the Data Controller; Barbara Sheret Data Protection Officer.

Membership - Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). Since 2021 the total number of members elected to the PCC is 9, or 1/10 of the Electoral Roll, whichever is the larger number. A further 2 people may be co-opted for a year. One third of those elected to the Council retire from office each year and are eligible for re-election. In 2024 the following served on the PCC:

Vicar:	The Rev John Musson	Chair until July 2024
Churchwardens:	Chris Isbell and Kevin Custis	
Deanery Synod Rep:	Zoë Knight	

St. Mary's elected members:

Caryn Newell until APCM 2027
Zoë Knight until APCM 2025
Cornelia Parkin until APCM 2026 (resigned)
John Isbell until 2026 - Treasurer
John Curle until 2026
Kim Curle until 2026

There are 2 spaces for co-option but none were made.

The PCC extends sincere and grateful thanks to all the Church membership who work so hard to make our Church the worshipping, witnessing and welcoming community it is, and for their help and support in so many ways throughout the year.